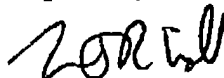


applications, but also requires the examiner to duplicate efforts by examining multiple applications of closely related inventions. Such practice not only wastes public and private funds and Patent Office resources, but also leads to the possibility of inconsistent examinations of closely related inventions. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request that the examiner reconsider and withdraw the restriction requirement.

In light of the foregoing, applicants respectfully submit that a full and complete response to the Office Action is provided herein, and request that the application proceed to examination.

In the event this response is not timely filed, applicants hereby petition for the appropriate extension of time and request that the fee for the extension along with any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper be charged to deposit account 12-2252.

Respectfully Submitted,



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Date: September 13, 2004

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